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WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT FUNDING APPROVED FOR PALM BEACH COUNTY

On May 21, 1974 in Orlando, Florida, the State Department of Pollution Control approved \$46.2 million in federal grants to assist in the implementation of major parts of Palm Beach County's Water Management Program. This grant approval by the Department of Pollution Control, represents the half-way point of a sustained coordinated effort by The Area Planning Board, the Board of County Commissioners and the municipalities of Palm Beach County to halt millions of gallons of human and industrial waste pouring each day into our rivers, canals, lakes and even the ocean itself. The creation and initial implementation of the Water Quality Management Program can be considered as a major success in a concerted effort to save Palm Beach County, from "drowning in its own sewage".

Pollution currently exists in the County's inland and estuarine waters to an extent ranging from what is termed 'moderate' to a degree which could be termed 'deadly' or essentially poisonous to marine and human life that is exposed to it. This condition has developed at a tremendously accelerated rate due to the present lack of adequate sewage treatment facilities and the tremendous influx of new residents. The fragmented wastewater management systems and authorities which presently exist in the County have proven to be substantially unable to cope with the situation. At the present time there are approximately 160 sewage treatment facilities in Palm Beach County providing various degrees of treatment; this and the use of septic tanks by over 80,000 persons in Palm Beach County are the major contributing factors in the degradation of water quality within the County.

The fact that Palm Beach County is presently undergoing intensive urbanization emphasizes the need for adequate, economical wastewater treatment to prop-

erly manage the available, but depleting water resources within the County.

Active Water Quality Management Planning in Palm Beach County began in 1970, when the City of West Palm Beach and the Board of County Commissioners, recognizing the steady decline in the area's water resources and the increasing demand for service, authorized several feasibility studies, followed by Federal grant applications for a regional wastewater collection, treatment and disposal program for the east central portion of Palm Beach County. This marked the first attempt in Palm Beach County to obtain a regional wastewater management system. The City of West Palm Beach was to provide collection facilities to transmit wastewater from several municipalities and the unincorporated areas in the east central portion of Palm Beach County to the West Palm Beach wastewater treatment plant for treatment and disposal.

As a further step toward water quality management, the Area Planning Board of Palm Beach County, in November, 1971, obtained a Federal grant to develop a Water Quality Management Plan for Palm Beach County after receiving authorization from the Palm Beach County Commission and being designated by the Governor of Florida as the agency to carry out the water quality management planning in Palm Beach County. As a result, the Area Planning Board, in February, 1972, prepared an interim plan entitled, "*Regional Water Supply, Treatment and Distribution; and Regional Sewage Collection, Treatment and Disposal*", which formed the conceptual basis for regional treatment of wastewater in Palm Beach County. This Plan, after critical review, was adopted by both the Area Planning Board and the

Board of County Commissioners and approved by the Department of Pollution Control in March, 1972. The interim plan, as well as the final Water Quality Management Program was developed by the firm of William M. Bishop, Consulting Engineers with continuous Area Planning Board staff participation and assistance.

A Technical Advisory Committee provided valuable assistance in the preparation of study guidelines, review of input, evaluation of the project findings and the numerous proposals presented in the study. The membership of this Committee included representatives from the Palm Beach County Engineering and Health Departments, the Central & Southern Florida Flood Control District, the United States Geological Survey, the United States Corps of Engineers, the Florida Department of Pollution Control, the Environmental Protection Agency and numerous engineering firms which serve as consultants to Palm Beach County government and the 37 county municipalities.

The interim plan was then evaluated as to its proposed alternatives, as well as numerous other alternatives, to determine the most feasible cost effective solution. The interim Plan, after expansion and revision, then became the final Water Quality Management Plan of Palm Beach County. This final Plan was presented to the Public through eight public hearings held in various areas of the County to provide an opportunity for the citizens of Palm Beach County to be made aware of the Plan, make comments and provide valuable citizen participation.

The Plan was then adopted by the Area Planning Board; and was certified by the State of Florida Department of Pollution Control and the United States Environmental Protection Agency; thus establishing the Plan as the officially designated Water Quality Management Program for Palm Beach County. The Water Quality Management Plan, as adopted, represents an intensive effort by the Area Planning Board, the Board of County Commissioners, Palm Beach County Municipalities and other county agencies to attack the water pollution problem involving wastewater treatment and disposal in the most cost-effective methods possible with existing technology. Overall, the Plan will accomplish the following major strategies:

1. Correct water pollution problems by meeting joint State and Federal water quality standards;

2. Insure that the proposed plan is the most economical plan in terms of areawide considerations; and
3. Insure that the water quality to be attained will coincide with the most beneficial uses of the County's waters.

On May 21, 1974, the Department of Pollution Control, after its review and approval of the Water Quality Management Program, approved \$46.2 million in Federal grants to implement Palm Beach County's Water Quality Management Program. These monies will be utilized for the following projects:

City of West Palm Beach — \$35.9 million for the Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant; (Service will be extended to certain unincorporated areas of Palm Beach County, Riviera Beach, Lake Worth and Palm Beach);

City of Delray Beach — \$8.4 million for the Regional Plant;

City of Boynton Beach — \$742,000 for Transmission and Collection Lines to hook up to the Delray Plant;

City of Pahokee — \$877,000 for the expansion of its existing sewer plant.

Following the procedure of applying up-to-date technology to solve problems, the West Palm Beach sewer treatment plant will be one of the nation's first deep well injection systems, in which highly treated sewage will be disposed of by injection deep into the earth. As outlined above, in an effort to correct the area's pollution, the cities of Delray Beach and Boynton Beach have submitted a joint application in accordance with the Water Quality Management Plan, for EPA funds. Under this application, the South Central System would serve Delray Beach and Boynton Beach and five satellite communities (Village of Golf, Hypoluxo, Briny Breezes, Ocean Ridge and Gulf Stream).

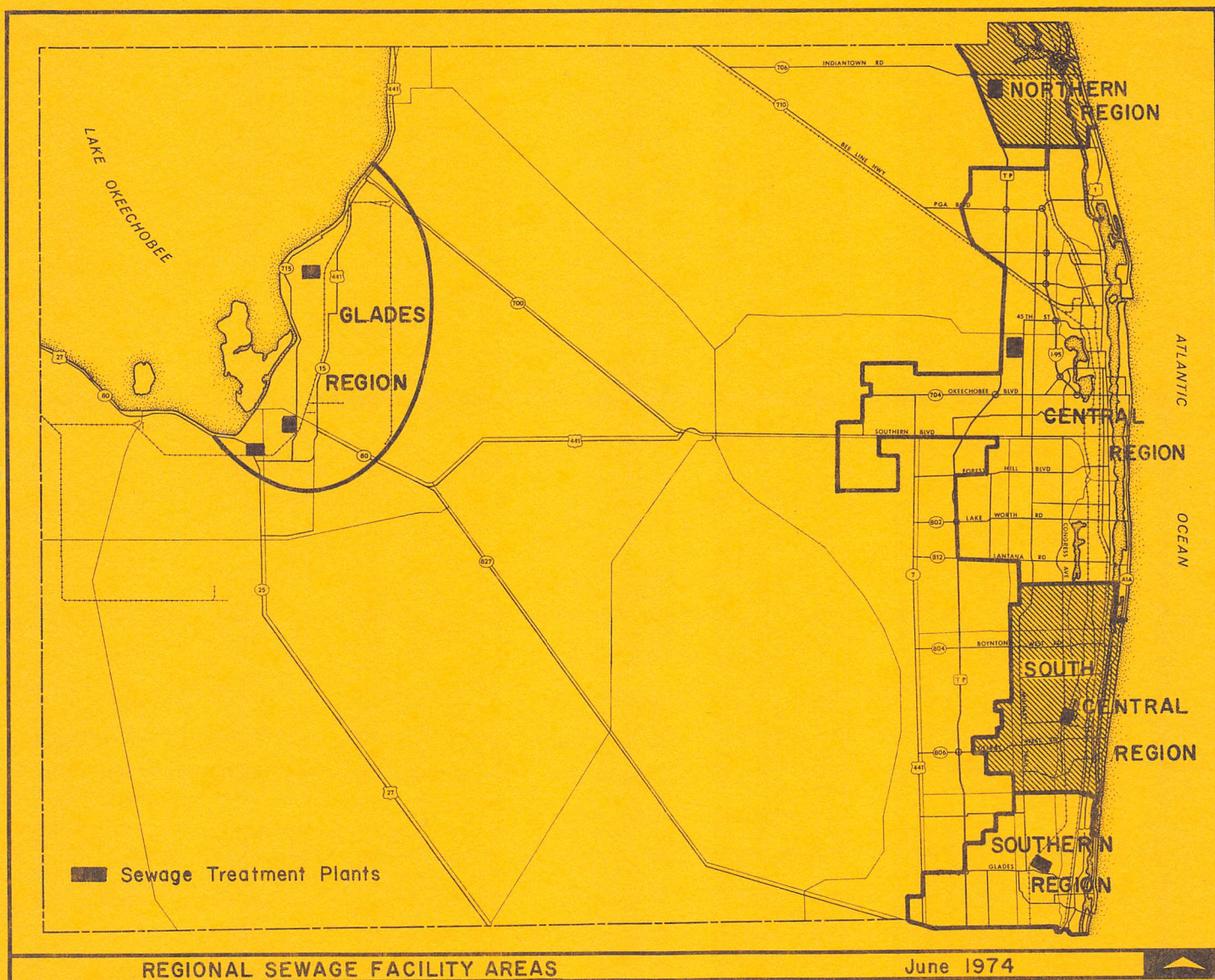
The cooperation and coordination that has been steadily growing within the County prior to and following the development of the Water Quality Management Plan is further demonstrated by the recent success on the part of the Area Planning Board in obtaining resolutions from local Palm Beach County Municipalities indicating their intent to join with other municipalities in the development and implementation of a total areawide water pollution control

and treatment management plan for Palm Beach County which is currently underway. This is the initial step for obtaining area designation and funding for the Section 208 pollution control program.

A further example of the continuing concern and awareness of the problems of water pollution and methods to combat it has been shown by the Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District, located in the northeastern area of Palm Beach County, which has embarked upon an extensive and progressive program for regional wastewater manage-

ment, utilizing independently obtained federal funding to accomplish their objectives.

It should be emphasized that any plan of this magnitude cannot be successful without the cooperation and coordination between all the agencies involved. The only true way to measure the effectiveness of the Water Quality Management Plan is from its beneficial results obtained by upgrading the quality of the receiving waters and in the maintenance of our existing water resources. The only way to accomplish this is through effective implementation of the Plan.



The above map illustrates the five regional sewage facility areas as delineated in the Water Quality Management Program. Northern Region — Jupiter, Tequesta, Jupiter Inlet Colony Area; Central Region — West Palm Beach, Palm Beach, Riviera Beach, Lake Worth, etc.; South Central Region — The Delray Beach-Boynton Beach Area; Southern Region — Boca Raton Area; and, Glades Region — Pahokee, Belle Glade and South Bay.

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